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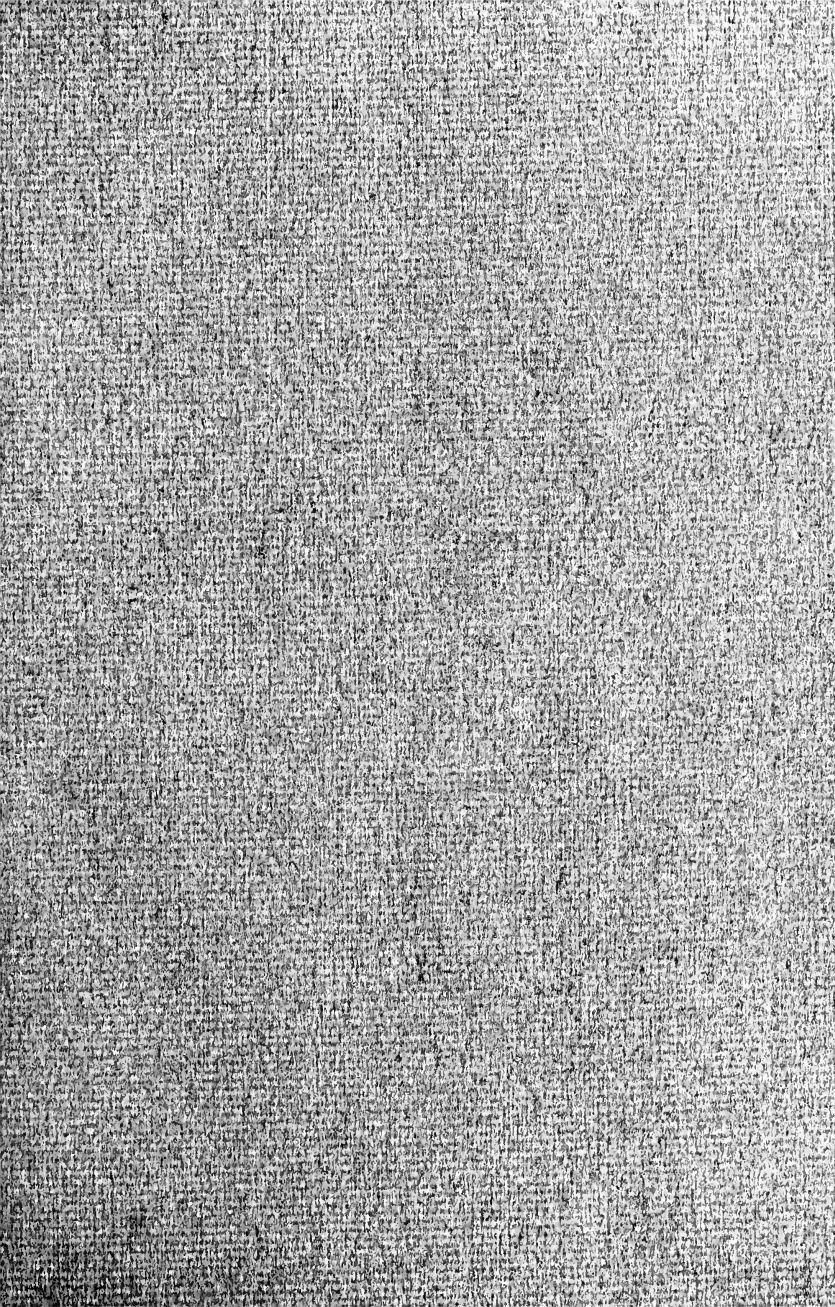
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TRACT NO. IV.

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THE SLAVE TRADE.

The proceedings and debates during the last session of the late Congress, indicate a most marked deterioration of moral sentiment at the South in respect to the African slave trade, and are fearfully ominous of the near approach of the time, when, at any rate in the Gulf States, that hitherto universally reprobated traffic will be as heartily sustained as is the institution of slavery itself.

Only so lately as in 1856, when Mr Etheridge of Tennessee presented resolutions in the House on that subject, nobody in that body was found bold enough to express any sympathy for the slave trade, and his resolutions, as modified in their phraseology by Mr. Orr of South Carolina, were agreed to with only eight dissenting votes. And even as to these votes, whatever may have been the real motives which controlled them, they were given professedly, not from any objection to the opinions set out in the resolutions, but from an opposition to the adoption of any resolutions whatever, and upon the ground that the revival of the African slave trade was not a practical question before the country.

Nevertheless, in the face of all this apparent unanimity, Mr. Etheridge in 1856 predicted that the Democratic party at the South would ultimately adopt the African slave trade as a part of its creed and policy, and the prediction, extraordinary as it appeared when made, is even now being verified. Mr. Etheridge understood thoroughly the composition of the political combination, whose future course he predicted. His error, if he committed any, was in not anticipating the rapidity with which a foregone conclusion would be reached.

The Consular and Diplomatic Appropriation Bill which was passed last winter, contained, among other things, a clause appropriating seventy-five thousand dollars to enable the President of the United States to carry into effect the act of March 3, 1819, the proposed appropriation being based upon an executive statement of the expenses incurred, and to be incurred, in the return to Africa of the negroes rescued from the Echo.

These expenses consisted of the bounties due by law to the officers capturing the Echo, of the cost of trials and of supporting the negroes prior to their delivery in Africa, and of a sum, equal to one hundred and fifty dollars per head, agreed to be paid to the Colonization Society, for maintaining the negroes for one year after their delivery in Africa, and for instructing them, during that period, in the arts of civilized life. The proportion of these sums was as follows:

Bounties	-	-	-	-	-	\$7,850
Expenses of trial and of supporting negroes before delivering them in Africa	-	-	-	-	-	35,050
Colonization Society	-	-	-	-	-	32,100
						75,000

The law under which these expenses were incurred, was the second section of the act of March 3, 1819, which section is in the words following:

"And be it further enacted, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient for the safe keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, as may be so delivered and brought within their jurisdiction, and to appoint a proper person or persons, residing upon the coast of Africa, as agent or agents for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, delivered from on board vessels, seized in the prosecution of the slave trade, by commanders of the United States armed vessels."

The history of the proceedings of the Government under this section, is, that President Monroe, soon after the law was passed, called the attention of Congress to a possible doubt which existed, whether it authorized any expenditure in respect to rescued negroes, after their delivery in Africa. He, however, informed Congress that he should proceed upon the construction that such expenditure was authorized, unless

that body should remove doubt by declaratory legislation, and give him directions to proceed differently. Congress has never acted further upon the subject, and the construction given to the law by President Monroe, has been acted upon without interruption from that day to this. Very considerable expenses seem to have been incurred in this way. Mr. Dowdell of Alabama stated in a speech made in the House on the 25th of January, that, up to the year 1830, the cost of returning two hundred and sixty recaptured negroes had amounted to the sum of \$264,700, being more than one thousand dollars per head. This is more than three times the rate of cost upon the Echo negroes.

Although it is hardly worth while, after a construction of law has been settled by a practice of forty years, to discuss the merits of it, it would certainly seem, that the expression of doubts by President Monroe, should be ascribed rather to his extreme caution and scrupulosity, than to any uncertainty fairly to be found in the law itself. It provides, in express terms, for "*receiving the negroes*" upon the coast of Africa, and for an agency for that purpose. It must have been contemplated that such an agency would involve all the expenses necessary to the "*receiving*" of destitute and distressed persons, who must be maintained until they can be put in the way of obtaining their own livelihood. Human beings, even if they are black, cannot be discharged upon a barren strand like bales of goods. The law did not contemplate that they should be thus left to shift for themselves. They were to be "*received*," and by a suitable agency to be designated for that purpose, and to be "*received*" of necessity, not as merchandise, but as men, women, and children, with all the wants and claims of humanity.

The appropriation proposed last winter in respect to the negroes rescued from the Echo, was thus required by a proper and long-settled construction of the act of March 3, 1819, and would never have been assailed, but for the newly-awakened desire to revive the African slave trade.

In the House, on the 27th of January, two motions in respect to this appropriation were voted upon; one made by Mr. Dowdell of Alabama to strike out the appropriation altogether, and the other made by Mr. Crawford of Georgia to reduce the appropriation from seventy-five to forty-five thousand dollars, so as to cut off the sum proposed to be paid to the Colonization Society for maintaining and educating the negroes for one year after their delivery in Africa.

In substance there was no difference, in intent, or in effect, between these two motions. The adoption of either, nullified and practically abrogated the act of March 3, 1819. The motion of Mr. Dowdell left no provision for the expenses of returning rescued negroes to Africa, or of supporting them prior to their return. The motion of Mr. Crawford would leave them to be thrown naked upon the coast of Africa, there to perish by hunger or violence; a course of procedure so repugnant to humanity, as to be certain to render the act of March 3, 1819, odious, and thereby to bring about its repeal.

Nevertheless, although the effect of the two motions was in reality the same, that of Mr. Dowdell was most offensive in point of form. The motion of Mr. Crawford had this pretence of justification for it, that it was affected to be placed upon a doubt whether the act of March 3, 1819, authorized any expenditure upon rescued negroes, after they were landed in Africa. The motion of Mr. Dowdell had no pretence of justification whatever. Neither he, nor anybody else, presumed to deny that the act of March 3 promised certain bounties to the recaptors of unlawfully-enslaved negroes, and that it also provided for their support until they were returned to Africa. So far, the law was explicit beyond all peradventure, and to strike out the whole appropriation, was to abrogate and nullify the law altogether. But it may be repeated again, that if thus more offensive in point of form, as it undoubtedly was, the policy indicated by Mr. Dowdell's motion was not, in intrinsic merit, one whit worse than the proposition of Mr. Crawford. And, indeed, it may fairly be questioned, if it would not be more humane to repeal the whole act of March 3, 1819, than to throw cargoes of negroes upon the coast of Africa, among strange tribes, without shelter, food, or means of any kind.

The motion of Mr. Dowdell was negatived, yeas 28, nays 163. Those who voted in the affirmative, were as follows:

SOUTH CAROLINA—Messrs. Bonham, Boyce, McQueen, and Miles.

TENNESSEE—Messrs. Avery, Maynard, and Wright.

TEXAS—Mr. Bryan.

VIRGINIA—Messrs. Caskie and Goode.

FLORIDA—Mr. Hawkins.

ALABAMA—Messrs. Cobb, Curry, Dowdell, Houston, Moore, Shorter, and Stallworth.

GEORGIA—Messrs. Crawford, Gartrell, Seward, Stephens, and Trippé.

LOUISIANA—Messrs. Davidson and Sandidge.

MISSISSIPPI—Messrs. McRae and Singleton.

NORTH CAROLINA—Mr. Ruffin.

The motion of Mr. Crawford was negatived, yeas 59, nays 145. Those who voted in the affirmative, were as follows:

TENNESSEE—Messrs. Avery, Maynard, Watkins, Wright, and Zolliecoffer.

MISSISSIPPI—Messrs. Barksdale, McRae, and Singleton.

VIRGINIA—Messrs. Bocoock, Caskie, Edmundson, Garnett, Goode, Hopkins, Jenkins, Letcher, and Smith.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Messrs. Bonham, Boyce, McQueen, and Miles.

NORTH CAROLINA—Messrs. Branch, Ruffin, Shaw, and Vance.

TEXAS—Mr. Bryan.

KENTUCKY—Messrs. Burnett, Clay, Peyton, Stevenson, and Talbott.

ALABAMA—Messrs. Cobb, Curry, Dowdell, Moore, and Stallworth.

GEORGIA—Messrs. Crawford, Gartrell, Jackson, Seward, Stephens, and Trippé.

LOUISIANA—Messrs. Davidson, Eustis, and Sandidge.

FLORIDA—Mr. Hawkins.

ILLINOIS—Mr. Hodges.

NORTH CAROLINA—Messrs. Ruffin, Shaw, and Vance.

Of the one hundred and forty-five votes against Mr. Crawford's motion, only nineteen were from the slave States, as follows:

MISSOURI—Messrs. Anderson, Caruthers, Craig, and Phelps.

MARYLAND—Messrs. Bowie, Davis, Ricard, and Stewart.

NORTH CAROLINA—Messrs. Gilmer and Winslow.

ARKANSAS—Mr. Greenwood.

TENNESSEE—Messrs. Jones and Smith.

KENTUCKY—Messrs. Marshall, Mason, and Underwood.

VIRGINIA—Mr. Millson.

DELAWARE—Mr. Whitely.

GEORGIA—Mr. Wright.

Thus, of the sixty-eight slave-State members present and voting, forty-nine voted for Mr. Crawford's motion. Of the absentees, Mr. Woodson of Missouri, who came in after the vote was declared, said he should have voted for the motion, if he had arrived in season.

Another motion in respect to this appropriation, had been voted upon in Committee of the Whole on the 26th of January. This was made by Mr. Bonham of South Carolina, and being rejected in Committee of the Whole, there is no record to show who supported it.

Mr. Bonham's motion was to qualify the appropriation by the following proviso:

"Provided, That no part of this sum shall be used for schooling the children, or for instructing the children and adults in the arts of civilized life."

Mr. Bonham said, among other things:

"It is now, for the first time, that we have an instance in an appropriation bill for teaching Africans the arts of civilized life. This is the point."

Mr. Bonham could tolerate nothing, which treated Africans as if they were capable of being civilized, or which implied the idea, that it was desirable to civilize them. He saw too clearly, that an idea like that, carried out in the practice of the Federal Government, was a cutting rebuke to the institutions of his own State, and of all the Southern States, in which the education of the negro is prohibited as criminal. According to the logic and morals of South Carolina, negroes are born to be slaves, not to be civilized.

The opposition in the House to the appropriation for the expenses of the Echo negroes, was carried to an unusual extreme. The principal portion of the men concerned in it, having failed to strike the appropriation out of the Consular and Diplomatic Appropriation Bill, voted against the passage of the bill itself, and succeeded in defeating it three times. They did this, although they were the political friends of the Administration, and under party obligations to sustain the general appropriation bills for carrying on the Government. This violent course of procedure, proposing to sacrifice an entire appropriation bill rather than submit to an obnoxious sec-

tion, marks the rancor and desperation of the partisans of the African slave trade.

In the Senate, this appropriation for the Echo negroes gave rise to the same discussions which it had excited in the House.

Mr. Clay of Alabama moved to strike out the whole appropriation, but, just before the vote was taken on the 16th of February, he so modified his motion as to propose to strike out \$75,000 and insert \$45,000, being a motion similar to that made in the House by Mr. Crawford.

Mr. Clay's motion was negatived, yeas 12, nays 40, the following Senators voting for it:

Messrs. Chesnut, Clay, Davis, Fitzpatrick, Hammond, Iverson, Johnson of Tennessee, Mason, Reid, Thompson of Kentucky, Toombs, and Ward.

Of the forty negative votes, twelve were from the slave States, (if we reckon Delaware as such,) as follows:

Messrs. Bates, Bell, Benjamin, Crittenden, Green, Houston, Hunter, Mallory, Pearce, Polk, Slidell, and Yulee.

Let us now examine what was said in the debates in Congress upon this Echo appropriation.

In the House, on the 25th of January, Mr. Dowdell of Alabama said:

"I will take this occasion to say, without discussing the expediency of reopening the slave trade, *a matter which properly belongs to the sovereign States whose industrial policy is to be affected by it*, that the laws are highly offensive in defining that to be piracy upon the high seas *which is not robbery*, and in attaching the death penalty to an act which in itself is *not necessarily immoral*."

Mr. Clay of Kentucky said:

"I am opposed to all these laws on our statute book in relation to the slave trade, and I will not vote a dollar for the purpose."

In the House, on the next day, (January 26th,) Mr. Crawford of Georgia said:

"In 1819, the whole South was unanimously against the slave trade. *Now, it is becoming divided*, and unless the war upon slavery is stopped, *fifteen years will witness the trade open for the South*, and our then Mexican possessions reaching to Guatemala certainly, and probably further south."

Mr. Seward of Georgia said:

"I look upon the law for the suppression of the slave trade as mischievous and wrong. While I do not pretend to commit myself in reference to the policy of the slave trade as affecting the States whose interests would be touched by it, I am opposed to the whole law, because I think it wrong and a violation of the Constitution. * * *

"Your navy is to be used as a police to interfere with the business of citizens, and to arrest them for a crime which is said to be piracy. I say that that strikes at the institution of slavery at the South. I want to have that law repealed. I want to leave this matter to be settled by the States as a domestic question. I doubt whether, so far as my State (Georgia) is concerned, she would be benefited by the foreign slave trade, because I think she has at present a sufficient

'supply of labor. But there are other States that may differ from us in that respect; for instance, the State of Texas; and I want all the States to have the right, without the interference of Congress, to carry on the slave trade, if they wish.'

Mr. Clay of Kentucky, by way of explaining and modifying what he had said on the previous day, declared that he was opposed to the reopening of the slave trade, although he disliked the existing laws against it, and especially disliked the 8th article of the Ashburton treaty. He said:

"I am especially opposed to another law, or rather treaty stipulation, on our statute book, and that is the 8th article of the treaty of Washington. I regard it as an entangling alliance with Great Britain. I regard it as an alliance so entangling, that last year it produced all those outrages on our flag which occurred in the Gulf, and it is producing every day outrages upon our flag on the coast of Africa. It is an entangling alliance which requires us to keep a force of eighty guns constantly on the coast of Africa."

Mr. Miles of South Carolina said:

"I am not prepared to advocate the reopening of the slave trade, but I am prepared to advocate, with all my mind and strength, the sweeping away from our statute book, of laws which stamp the people of my section as pirates, and put a stigma upon their institutions. I will never consent, if I can possibly help it, to allow this stigma to remain, which degrades and puts a slur upon the people of my part of the Confederacy. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that these are questions that ought to be left, as gentlemen have said, to time; and to be controlled, moreover, by the sovereign States themselves. I have very grave and serious doubts about the constitutionality of the laws for the suppression of the slave trade."

In the House, on the 27th of January, Mr. Crawford of Georgia said:

"This question of opening the slave trade is one of the highest importance, and one which threatens to make and unmake parties in the country. It is a question which grows stronger and stronger every day, and I believe the result of it will be the building up and tearing down of party platforms."

In the debate in the Senate, February 16, Mr. Mason of Virginia and Mr. Brown of Mississippi both maintained that humanity required that the Echo negroes should have been retained in the United States as slaves.

Mr. Mason said:

"If humanity had been consulted, or, rather, if humanity could have been consulted instead of consulting the actual provisions of the law, these negroes, I presume none will doubt, would have been far better provided for by retaining them in the country into which they had been illegally brought, and making such provision for them in a state of bondage as the laws of the States where they were landed would admit of, or might require."

Mr. Brown said:

"The only inhumanity inflicted upon them at

all, was by the action of your Government. *They would have been delighted to remain in our country. Slavery here is better than that sort of freedom which they enjoyed at home.* They were not allowed to do it. They were seized, put on shipboard, and sent out of the country. Now, we are asked to foot the bill, to do it without even the shadow of authority under the Constitution. I would repeal the law, repeal it instantly, as not based upon the Constitution which we are sworn to support."

Some other proceedings in Congress last winter, in connection with the slave trade, are deserving of notice.

On the 23d of December, Mr. Blair of Missouri asked leave to submit the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the Committee on the Judiciary be, and hereby is, instructed to report a bill more effectually to prevent the slave trade, under the guise of the 'coolie trade' so called, or of 'apprentices,' or of 'African labor importation companies,' or under any other name, or in any other guise, the real purpose or effect of which may be, directly or indirectly, immediately or ultimately, to make slaves of the persons so procured and transported."

Unanimous consent being required, objection was made by Mr. Houston of Alabama.

On the same day, Mr. Kilgore of Indiana asked leave to submit the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to report to this House, what information has been received by him in regard to the recent importation of slaves from Africa into Georgia, and what steps, if any, have been taken to punish this violation of the laws of the United States."

Unanimous consent being required, objection was made by Mr. Garnett of Virginia.

On the 26th of January, the Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the Consular and Diplomatic Appropriation Bill, Mr. Seward of Georgia moved the following as an amendment:

"Provided, further, That all the laws heretofore passed, prohibiting the slave trade, be and the same are hereby repealed. And that the policy of restricting the foreign slave trade be left with each of the States, as affecting their own local policy."

This amendment was not voted upon, being ruled to be out of order.

On the 23d of December, Mr. Sandidge of Louisiana introduced a resolution, which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for the abrogation of that article of the Ashburton treaty which requires the keeping of a squadron on the coast of Africa, for the suppression of the slave trade.

On the 31st of January, Mr. Kilgore of Indiana asked leave to submit the following resolutions:

"Whereas the laws prohibiting the African slave trade have become a topic of discussion with newspaper writers and political agitators, many of them boldly denouncing these laws as unwise in policy and disgraceful in their provisions, and insisting on the justice and propriety of their repeal, and the revival of

the odious traffic in African slaves; and whereas recent demonstrations afford strong reasons to apprehend that said laws are to be set at defiance, and their violation openly countenanced and encouraged by a portion of the citizens of some of the States of this Union; and whereas it is proper, in view of said facts, that the sentiment of the people's representatives in Congress should be made public in relation thereto: Therefore,

"1. *Resolved*, That while we recognize no right, on the part of the Federal Government or any other law-making power save that of the States wherein it exists, to interfere with or disturb the institution of domestic slavery where it is established or protected by State legislation, we do hold that Congress has power to prohibit the foreign traffic, and that no legislation can be too thorough in its measures, nor can any penalty known to the catalogue of modern punishment for crime be too severe, against a traffic so inhuman and unchristian.

"2. *Resolved*, That the laws in force against said traffic are founded upon the broadest principles of philanthropy, religion, and humanity; that they should remain unchanged except so far as legislation may be needed to render them more efficient; and that they should be faithfully and promptly executed by our Government, and respected by all good citizens.

"3. *Resolved*, That the Executive should be sustained and commended for any proper effort, whenever and wherever made, to enforce said laws, and to bring to speedy punishment the wicked violators thereof, and all their aiders and abettors."

Mr. Burnett of Kentucky objected to the introduction of these resolutions, but it being in order on that day to move a suspension of the rules, Mr. Kilgore moved that they be suspended, so that his resolutions might be considered. The suspension of the rules was not carried, yeas 115, nays 84—not two-thirds.

Of the affirmative votes, only five were from the slave States, as follows:

MARYLAND—Messrs. Bowie, Davis, and Ricand.

NORTH CAROLINA—Mr. Gilmer.

KENTUCKY—Mr. Marshall.

And of these five, only one, Mr. Bowie, belongs to the Democratic party.

The negative vote came, as to the bulk of it, from the slave States. The balance was contributed by their Northern allies, as follows:

Messrs. Barry, Florence, Gillis, Gregg, Lawrence W. Hall, Hodges, Miller, Niblack, Searing, Aaron Shaw, Robert Smith, George Taylor, Vallandigham, White, and Wortendyke—15.

In the Senate, on the 16th of February, the following discussion took place between Mr. Wilson of Massachusetts, and Mr. Hammond of South Carolina:

"Mr. WILSON. We have branded the slave trade; we have passed laws against it; and, although we were the first nation to brand the slave trade, I suppose that, owing to a variety of causes not necessary to discuss at this time, we have done as much as any other people to keep that trade alive. Our ships have hovered

on the coast of Africa and have engaged in the traffic. One of those ships has been captured by a vessel of our navy and brought into this country. These Africans, in the spirit of the law—I say nothing about the letter of the law—have been returned, and the President of the United States has made a bargain with the only men, it seems to me, with whom he could have made a bargain, the colony of Liberia, to take care of these recaptured Africans. I think the President of the United States, in so acting, acted according to the spirit of the law, and according to the public judgment of the country; and, for one, I give my vote most freely to carry out the bargain the President of the United States has made.

"Whether it be strictly legal or not, I care not. I always notice that when an act of humanity, an act of liberality, an act of justice, is to be performed, it is very difficult to find authority, either in the Constitution or laws of the country. For myself, I see in the law of 1819 enough to authorize the President to make this bargain, and my own heart impels me to give it a prompt and decisive vote. I simply say that there is a disposition in this country, and it is said there are secret organizations in this country, to reopen the slave trade; that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been subscribed to carry it out and engage in the trade—to defend the trade; and that, in portions of this country, grand juries cannot be relied upon to indict persons if caught in that trade. Well, sir, we have made a capture; we have returned those persons. I want it to go out to the country and to the world, for the credit of the American name and the American character, that the contract made by the President of the United States is in accordance with the sentiment of the people, and that he is sustained by a vote approaching unanimity in the Congress of the United States.

"Mr. HAMMOND. The Senator from Massachusetts says that there are parts of the United States where grand juries cannot be found to indict persons engaged in the African slave trade. I should like to know to what part he alludes.

"Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I do not know that I said that there were parts of this country where grand juries would not indict. I said there were portions of this country where it was believed they would not. It remains to be seen whether that be the case or not. I want to say, in reference to the statement I made, that it was but a day or two since I had a conversation with a gentleman, who was a member of the last Congress, from the Southern States—a man who, in Congress, always spoke for and advocated the policy of slavery. He has spent this winter mostly in Alabama, and he said to me, the other day, that he was amazed at the sentiment he found in the Gulf States; that that sentiment approached unanimity in favor of reopening the slave trade; and, from the investigations he had made, he was satisfied that organizations existed for the opening of the trade; that money was subscribed for the busi-

ness; and that it would be extremely difficult, in that part of the country, to get a grand jury to find an indictment, or to get a conviction from a petit jury; that he was amazed at the sentiment generally pervading that part of the country; and that we had no conception of it here. I think that anybody who has read of the movement led by Mr. Yancey of Alabama, and other gentlemen in that part of the country, will come to this conclusion: that there is a party, mainly in the Gulf States, extending through a portion of the Southern States, in favor of reopening the slave trade; and these doctrines have been avowed during the present session of Congress, by gentlemen representing that section of the Union, in the other branch of Congress.

“Mr. HAMMOND. I am not at all, nor is any portion of the South, liable for the impressions which any person travelling through the South may form. There is no sort of doubt that a few persons in the South, some of them highly respectable, wish to open the African slave trade; but from what knowledge I have myself, and from what knowledge I have received, and I have been active in inquiry, my opinion is, that nine-tenths of the people of the South are utterly opposed to it; and I think the more the subject is discussed, the fewer will be the number who are in favor of reopening the slave trade. I will inform the Senator from Massachusetts of one fact of which I supposed he was cognizant: that during the past week the grand jury in Savannah has found true bills in two different cases against persons whom it was alleged had participated in the African slave trade.”

Mr. Hammond is a great slaveholder, and, like most of his class, is opposed to the opening of a trade which would reduce the value of his property. But it is most evident that the strength of his own opinion against that trade, misled him in respect to the actual sentiment and to the tendency of sentiment at the South. He could not possibly express himself to-day, with the confidence which he displayed on the 16th of February. At that time, he repudiated, and with apparent resentment, the suggestion that Southern grand juries would refuse to find indictments for violations of the laws against the slave trade. Since that time, a trial jury in his own State has acquitted the officers and crew of the *Echo*, who were taken *flagrante delicto*: and at this day, it is admitted that nowhere at the South is it possible to obtain convictions for similar offences.

Mr. Hammond was mistaken, as to the condition of Southern sentiment at the time when he spoke, but still more mistaken as to the course and tendency of Southern sentiment. Mr. Crawford, who declared that the slave-trade question was “*growing stronger and stronger*,” and would soon make and unmake parties and platforms at the South, understood that matter, it is evident, a good deal better than Mr. Hammond did. Mr. Crawford is a politician who belongs to the present day and generation. Mr. Hammond, recalled to public life from a long retirement upon his plantation, belongs to the past.

Nevertheless, if the present and recent condi-

tion of public sentiment at the South is not what Mr. Hammond, in February, supposed it to be, it certainly was so at a period not remote. The Southern feeling in favor of the slave trade, to whatever extent it now actually exists, is certainly a new thing under the sun, although it may have resulted from a train of causes which have been in operation a good while. If it has been long at work out of sight, the disorder has, at any rate, broken out suddenly; so suddenly, indeed, that the existence of it is hardly yet realized.

Nor is it necessary to be true, in order that we should suffer all that we possibly can suffer from the evil, that the slave-trade sentiment should get possession of the whole South, or even of a major part of the South. If that sentiment becomes predominant in any one State so situated as to carry on the trade, the mischief is done. But the actual case is, that the whole tier of States upon the Gulf of Mexico is infected; and this being so, the African slave trade may wax and flourish, be the predicament of public opinion, in Virginia, Maryland, or even South Carolina, what it may. It is the region upon the Gulf which wants more slaves than it raises, and the evil becomes formidable indeed, when the people of that region, with its vast stretch of sea coast, determine to receive cheap slaves from Africa, rather than dear ones from the northern slave States.

The movement at the South in favor of the slave trade, although new and sudden, is, after all, only a logical and necessary result of the ideas which have been propagated in that quarter during the last twenty-five years. When the old ground, unanimously maintained by the revolutionary fathers, that Slavery was a great evil, to be endured only until it could be got rid of by safe and practicable methods, was abandoned for the new doctrines of Mr. Calhoun, that the institution was a positive good, establishing the best relations between capital and labor, and beneficial alike to both parties to it, a movement in favor of the African slave trade could not be long postponed. In no respect more objectionable, and in many respects vastly less so, than the slave trade between Virginia and the Gulf States, it has the powerful recommendation of the greater cheapness in the cost of the commodity dealt in, and this relative cheapness has been continually on the increase, the price of slaves in Virginia having more than duplicated within a quarter of a century.

Of late years, also, schemes of aggrandizement, looking to the double objects of control in the Union so long as the Union may endure, and of laying the foundations for a powerful slaveholding empire upon the Gulf of Mexico in the event of the disruption of the Union, have taken possession of the Southern mind; and to these schemes, in anything like the development and proportions designed by those who cherish them, the revival of the African slave trade seems to be essential. Slavery cannot exist without slaves; and if, as Mr. Crawford of Georgia supposes, the slaveholding section is to absorb the whole of Mexico, quite to Guatemala, within fifteen years, or within three times that period, it can only be

done by fresh importations of negroes. In no other way is it possible, considering that free white laborers multiply more rapidly than negro slaves, to prevent such a prior occupation by free institutions of so much of the continent as remains to be occupied, as will confine slavery within territorial limits, not susceptible as yet of precise demarkation, but discernible, nevertheless, with sufficient definiteness and distinctness, to alarm politicians proverbial for their far-sighted anticipation of future events.

As a matter of fact, the African slave trade with the United States, is now actually reopened, after being closed for half a century. The current information of the day leaves no room to doubt that cargoes of slaves are being landed, from time to time, in the Gulf States, and that preparations are being made to enter upon the traffic in good earnest and upon a large scale. The conditions exist, which render the continuance and expansion of the traffic inevitable. There is a market for the subject-matter of the traffic, offering a profit vastly exceeding the risk. In fact, the risk is reduced to the small one of capture upon the high seas by the public vessels of the United States, and it is now certain that such capture involves only the loss of ship and cargo, unattended with danger of personal punishment to the parties concerned. If the cargo is once landed, the risk is ended, and the venture realized. Southern newspapers contain advertisements from responsible planters, offering so much per head for imported Africans. The interposition of legal authority has become abortive. Law, according to our frame of Government, is only enforceable through the instrumentality of juries, and Southern juries reflect, not the law, but the humors and prejudices of the vicinage. In the case of the *Echo*, taken with a full cargo of negroes on board, there was not merely not a conviction, but an absolute acquittal. A failure to convict might have resulted from the perversity of a single juror, but an acquittal required the concurrence of the whole panel. After an acquittal in such a case, it is idle to expect convictions in any case. The risk is thus nominal, while the profits of the trade are enormous. The risk is really less than that of the slave trade in Cuba, where heavy bribery is necessary with the Spanish officials, while the price of slaves in the United States exceeds the price in Cuba twofold, and the profit of the trade with the United States must therefore be more than twice as great as with Cuba. Where the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together. Where there are tempting profits, there will be no lack of men to do the business. If the Gulf States will buy raw Africans at five times their cost, there will be no want of sellers. Capital enough, ships enough, and seamen enough, can be found in New York city alone, to supply to the Gulf States one hundred thousand negroes annually. To anticipate such results, it is not necessary to assume the universal or even general depravity of mankind. This evil work may be done by a few persons, and it is sufficient to know that no business ever failed to be carried on, which offers remuneration to avarice.

This reopening of the slave trade with the United States, which may now be regarded as an accomplished fact, is one of the great events of the present times. To deal with it and put it down, by any proceedings subsequent to the landing of the victims of the trade, seems to be impossible. Our forms of Government are popular, even in the judicial department, and a fixed predetermination of juries, in respect to any class of subjects, overrides law, or, rather, settles practically what the law is. It is quite as true that the law is in the breast of the jury, as that it is in the breast of the judge.

It is this well-understood control of the locality, over the actual administration of law emanating from the central authority, which was doubtless one of the circumstances which created the strong desire for the acquisition of Cuba, on the part of all that class of persons who favor the revival of the African slave trade. The people of Cuba having been born and bred to that traffic, it could be carried on there against American law, just as it always has been carried on against Spanish law; and if the island was made a part of the United States, the transfer of slaves from it to the slave-buying States upon the Gulf of Mexico would become a legitimate commerce.

Upon the whole, if the African slave trade, now opened, is to be closed again, it must be done by operations on the coast of Africa and upon the high seas, and, to this end, there must be a complete reversal of the influences which dominate over the Government at Washington. Instead of abrogating the eighth article of the Ashburton treaty, the number of guns upon the coast of Africa should be increased, and effective light-draught and swift steamers substituted for slow-going sail vessels. But, without going into the details of measures, the whole *animus* of the Government at Washington must be changed. Interpreting the past by the light of present events, it is now evident that the real object of certain preposterous pretensions as to the sacredness of mere flags, without reference to the real nationality of vessels, was to facilitate the carrying on of the slave trade. So, too, without reference to doubtful and disputed questions of the right of visitation, it is now evident that the repulse of all overtures from foreign Powers, looking to amicable and well-guarded conventions upon this subject, is attributable to a secret spirit of favor towards the slave trade, which has long lurked in the governing dynasty in this country, and which has at length broken out without disguise and without shame. He must be charitable and confiding indeed, who believes that Administrations at Washington, controlled by the Gulf States, will ever do anything effective towards shutting up the African slave trade. Not such aid, or such defenders, do the times demand. If our laws are to be executed, there must be different executive agents. What is wanted, in short, to put down this infamous traffic, is a Republican President, and that would suffice to accomplish the object. The election of such a President would be felt in every slave barracoon in Africa. He might not alter the letter of the instructions under which our cruisers act, but the spirit in

which they would be executed would be instantly changed. Like master, like man. Official subordinates are quick to understand, without express words, what is desired of them. It is one thing for the officers of a squadron of observation to know that they best please the powers that be by seeing nothing and doing nothing, and quite another thing for them to know that their official superiors will punish remissness and reward activity. The 8th article of the Ashburton treaty would be a dead letter no longer, if the executive power of this country represented its moral convictions upon this subject. That is the change which the case demands, and it would effect a remedy, as suddenly as a thunderbolt dissipates the foul vapors of the atmosphere. And without this remedy, there appears no rational hope of arresting such an expansion of the slave trade, as will rivet slavery upon the continent, beyond the reach of help, or hope.

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